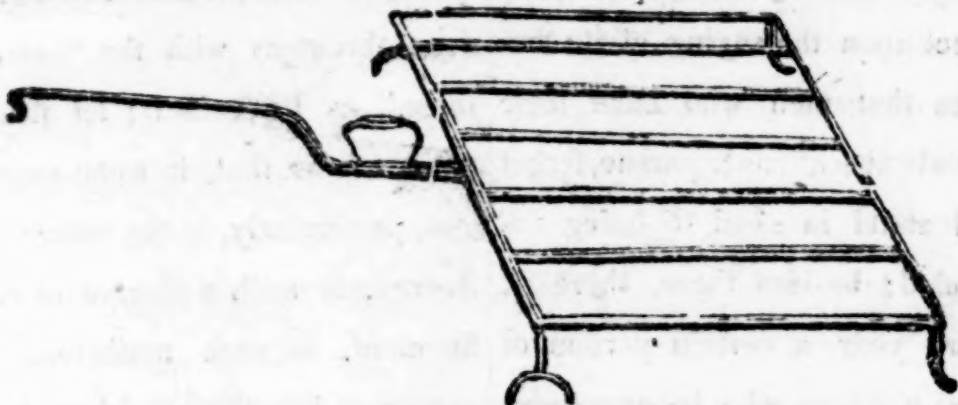


COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

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“ They will not laugh by-and-by! They will not laugh, when there remain neither *rents* nor *tithes*; and, mind, to preserve *either* of these, there must be some measures of a *decided assignat* character, unless there be a reform of the Parliament, for reduce establishments much, and reduce *debt at all*, they cannot without a *reform*! The landlords and parsons have, therefore, to choose of these three: *Reform*; *Assignats*; or *loss of rents and tithes*: and I would defy the Devil himself, if he were Premier, to prevent one of these. I would recommend the first; but, really, it is much more, now, the affair of the landlords and parsons than it is that of any body else.”—REGISTER, of May 1822.

CORN BILL.

TO THE DISTRESSED MANUFACTURERS.

Kensington, 24th Jan. 1827.

MY FRIENDS,

THE subject of the Corn Bill being one of the first which the Ministers have pledged themselves to bring before the Parliament when it shall assemble next month, it may be useful to you, or, at least, you may like to have my opinions relative to such measure,

before the measure be brought forward; and, I have so anxious a desire to do you good, or, even, to give you any trifling pleasure, that I set about this task with singularly great satisfaction. To be sure, it would seem to be next to impossible for me to lay down any principle, or to use any argument, which has not been laid

I

[ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.]

down or used by me heretofore. But, besides that the circumstances in which a thing is said, have some effect upon the saying of it; besides that men who have their private avocations to pursue, forget and stand in need of being reminded; besides these, there is, every year, a certain portion of mere children who become boys, and of boys who become thinking young men. Therefore, repetition, in such a case, and in a work like mine, is no more to be found fault with than are new editions of spelling-books or catechisms.

Before, however, I enter upon the subject of the Corn Bill itself, let me request your attention to some of the strange things which we now behold. In some parts of the north, particularly, and in several parts of the kingdom, theft and robbery are become so common, that, at last, men seem to begin to doubt whether society will not be dissolved, even in this way. In the meanwhile, severity of punishment has gone on increasing; the gaols enlarging; new sorts of prisons; new sorts of prison-discipline; and, let those nations hear it, whom Mr. CANNING threatens with the "moral force," as he calls it; let those nations hear that, in some cases, and, particularly, in the county of Surrey, to such a degree of refinement, to such mathematical precision has the punishment of criminals been reduced, that the prisoners are actually WEIGH-ED, at certain periods, in order to ascertain the effect which the punishments, of various sorts, have upon their bodies! In my last *Register* I mentioned, that the hellish Scotch writers, those pests of England and disgrace to all honest Scotchmen; those detested wretches, had published a proposition for selling the dead bodies of paupers from the poor-house, to the surgeons for dissection, in order to lighten the burthen of the poor-rates! To be sure, the monstrous wretch who put this upon paper, did not put his name; but, it was published in the London newspapers,

and I have not perceived that it has any where met with reprobation. The malefactor who robs on the highway, who breaks a house, who commits any felony short of that of *murder*; short of that of deliberate, wilful murder; any criminal short of this receives from the law no infliction of disgrace upon his dead body: it is only the wilful murderer and the traitor, whose body the law consigns to the hands of the dissector. But, here is a monster, or, rather, a band of monsters, who, in the capital of that country, in which the courts established by ALFRED still exist; here are a band of monsters to propose to sell to the surgeons for dissection, the bodies of those, who, after enduring all the various degrees of anguish which are found on the several steps to the poor-house, die in that poor-house, not only without having committed crime; but, possibly, having been reduced to poverty, having actually been brought into that very poor-house in consequence of their forbear-

ance to enrich themselves at the expense of others, in consequence of their generosity, and, perhaps, in consequence, even, of their tenderness, their compassion and their charity.

Why, my friends, did our ancestors ever dream that England would come to this pass? That lying devil, ANNA BRODIE, is endeavouring to make the public believe, that I am a Roman Catholic, and the woman, drunk or sober, has the audacity to assert, distinctly to assert, that I have had my daughters educated as Roman Catholics, and that they took letters of recommendation to the chief of the Jesuits at Saint Omer's, last year! In the *Wife of Bath's* words, I say of her: "All this thou sayest, and all thou sayest is lies." ANNA has recently appeared two or three times in the Court of King's Bench, and, in one case, particularly, for her infamous slanders respecting the private affairs of a family. ANNA is surprised, I dare say, that she, "notwithstanding her coverture,"

is thus handled by judges and juries; but, ANNA should remember the observation of SWIFT, namely, "That when women depart from the softness, the mildness, the modesty belonging to their sex; when they talk loudly, impudently, and clench their fists and stamp their feet, they ought to be considered as bullying men, and ought to be kicked down stairs accordingly"; and, if I recollect rightly, the Dean goes on very wisely to observe, that to look upon such women in any other light, and to bestow on them any other sort of treatment, would be to do gross injustice to those women who conduct themselves in a manner suitable to their sex. Remember this now, Anna: you have got a Doctor of Divinity for your husband, and he is rector (that is to say, *ruler of the souls*) of the parish of East Bourne, in Sussex. Ask your Doctor of Divinity whether the Doctor of Divinity that I have just quoted is not right. Whether he will be man

enough to tell you what he thinks, is more than I can say; but, I shall be at East Bourne sometime in the month of May, and then I will take the liberty to ask the Doctor how he makes shift to get on with one who has been so very foul-tongued with me, and so monstrous a liar into the bargain.

But, though I am a Protestant, and all whom I have had the educating of are Protestants, it would be not only to discover great ignorance, but great baseness, too, if I were not to recollect, and to remind my readers, also, that, when the Roman Catholic religion was the religion of England, a wretch, or set of wretches, who should have proposed, who should even have talked of, condemning people to be dissected, because they died after having lived some time upon alms, would have been torn to atoms. Oh, no! such thoughts as these never entered men's minds until these *enlightened* days of funding and free-trade! Nor did it ever before occur to

the mind of man, that a King of England would issue instructions to the Archbishops and Bishops to cause collections to be made from door to door for such of his labouring subjects as were in distress. The law of the land was, for pretty nearly a thousand years, that the poor were to be maintained out of the tithes and other endowments of the Church. Since that, the law of the land has been, and it is now, that every indigent person shall have a suitable maintenance out of *the land*. The law is, also, that men shall *not beg*; that they shall be *punished for begging*; that to beg is a *crime*; and, while there are boards stuck up about almost all the parishes in England, forbidding begging, stating the punishment which begging is to receive; while these notices everywhere stare us in the face, the parish-officers and others, even in some cases with the bea-dles to precede them, are actually going a begging from door to door! It may be worth your knowing, that this begging work has met

with but a very cold reception in London and Westminster. The begging agents have been distinctly told, in many, many places, that money would not be grudged to the *poor manufacturers*, but that it was not easy to perceive why the tradesmen of London should give their money to pay poor-rates *due from the land-owners in the North*.

It is impossible for any man in his senses to believe, that a state of things, that can have engendered the above-mentioned novelties, should be of permanent duration. It must have an end; and that end may be not very distant. We find the distress, as it is called, to extend itself all over the kingdom. At Sheffield, at Paisley and Glasgow: all over Yorkshire and Lancashire, in Nottinghamshire and in Norfolk: everywhere do we hear of distress; and, excepting in the lying columns of newspapers, no man can see the smallest chance of a change for the better. There are some persons, however, who are

of such a hoping disposition, that they are always expecting that some change for the better will take place, without ever being able to give the smallest reason for such an expectation. Some poet says that hope sticks to us to the last; and hope is a very good thing; but, hoping and *wishing* are things very different from each other. For there to be hope, there must be some *reason* as a foundation. A man may wish with or without reason, as I may wish that I could fly over the moon; and this sort of wishing it is, that assumes the name of hope in the politicians to whom I have alluded. These hopers rely, amongst other things, upon the effects of a *change in the Corn Laws*; it is worth while, therefore, for us to consider, before this grand expected measure can be adopted, what reason there is for believing that such change, if it take place, will have a tendency to remove the present distress.

First, however, is it certain that any change at all will be made in

the Corn Laws; next, what sort of change is it likely to be, if it take place; and, if a change take place, such as to admit even of a free importation of corn, what effect will that produce with regard to those who are now suffering distress?

Some people think, that, after all the talk about it, no alteration at all in the Corn-Laws will take place. The subject must be brought forward, and there must and will be a great deal of discussion. The result may be, a Bill passed in one house and rejected in the other; but, I do not think that this will be the result; because then all the blame, coming from a very numerous class of persons, would rest distinctly and visibly upon the Lords; for though, as to all practical purposes, the two Houses are one and the same, all the world does not see that: the forms indicate the contrary: and forms, in cases like this, pass for substances. I, therefore, think, that a Bill will pass, and that an alteration will be made.

As to the sort of alteration ; or rather, the degree, I suppose that it will consist of a little and a very little lowering of the price of English wheat, at which foreign wheat will be admitted. There will be a monstrous deal said about remunerating prices : poor WEBB HALL will seem to have been conjured up from the grave. All his doctrines will be repeated ; and we shall hear, from one end of the country to the other, of the necessity of giving to the land such prices as shall enable it to pay the tithes, the poor-rates, the county-rates, and some other burthens, which, as the land-people are always asserting, "*fall exclusively upon the land,*" which phrase is, I verily believe, the foolishhest that ever issued from the mouth or dropped from the pen of mortal man. It is curious to observe, that this notion of tithes, county-rates, and poor-rates falling *exclusively* upon the land, is a thing wholly new. Tithes have existed in England about twelve hundred years ; and, until since

the time of Pitt, and during his time, there never was such an idea in existence as that of the tithes coming out, finally, of the pocket of the farmer ; or, as he is now-a-days called, the "*agriculturist,*" which accursed hard word seems to have been made for the express purpose of rendering this new batch of doctrines even more harsh and disgusting than it otherwise would be. I wonder that it does not come into the head of my neighbour Tucker, the tallow-chandler, that the tax upon his candles falls *exclusively upon him*. Mr. Tucker is not such a fool : he knows very well that those who buy his candles pay the tax and not he ; and if he were a landlord or a farmer, would not he say that those who eat his wheat paid the tithe, in the same manner that those who burn his candles pay the tax ? Would not he say, that, as all the candle burners in England pay all the tax upon candles, so all the wheat eaters in England pay the tithes upon all the wheat that is grown in England ? This

is what he would say ; because this is what would be said by every man of common sense. It is hardly possible to believe that any one would be so foolish or so perverse as to say that there is a difference in the two cases, because the tithe can be taken in kind, while the tax is taken in money ; for, in the first place, the tithe is taken in money in nineteen cases out of every twenty ; and, in the next place, if the candle-maker were to give one candle out of ten to the tax-gatherer, instead of giving him one penny out of ten on the price of the candles, where would the difference be ? Seeing, therefore, that no candle-maker, no maltster, no currier, no tobacco-man, no cotton-printer ; seeing that no creature upon earth who has to pay taxes upon the article that he makes for sale ; seeing that no one of these has ever been beast enough to pretend, that the tax falls *exclusively upon him*, upon what ground is it, I wish to know, that the land-people believe, or affect to believe, that the tithes fall exclusively upon them ?

Precisely the same argument is applicable to the poor-rates, the road-rates, the county-rates, and all those charges, if there be any others, which the land-people pretend fall exclusively upon them. When a pot of beer is put into the hands of the drinker, and he is called upon for six-pence in the way of payment, there is, perhaps, a penny for barley, a halfpenny for hops : all the rest is for tax on malt, tax on beer, tax on the iron of the barrel, tax on the barrel-staves very likely, tax on the house that the beer is sold in, tax on the brew-house, tax on the harness of the horses that draw out the beer, tax on the landlord's house that sells the beer, tax on his permission to sell it, tax on the candles that he burns in serving it out, tax on the fire that he burns to warm the drinkers, tax on the tawdry gown of the dirty wench that brings it up out of the cellar, tax on his windows that give him light when he does

not burn candles, tax on the deal-boards that make the benches for the drinkers to sit upon; in short, the whole is tax, all but three half-pence at most, and this, too, you will observe, exclusive of all the farmer's taxes upon the barley and all the tithe which he has paid or yielded on that barley, and also exclusive of both tithe and tax which the hop-grower has paid upon the hops. The truth is, that if there were no tax at all upon the barley after it left the farmer, and through the whole progress of the malt to the lips of the drinker, beer of the present average strength would come to the drinker's lips for even less than three half-pence a pot; and, if it were such good stuff as that, a pottle of which I intend to send to Doctor BLACK one of these days, and which pottle, if he drink it in the course of two hours, I pledge myself shall give him ten hours of the soundest sleep that he ever had in his life; even a pot of such stuff as this would not cost three-pence. Very well, then: if the

beer drinker, when he gives a six-pence for a pot of beer, gives fourpence half-penny for tax, and three half-pence for beer, what would he say to the publican who should affect to believe that all the tax upon beer fell exclusively upon the publicans? And, if this would be a gross absurdity; if it would be a piece of ignorance or impudence unparalleled in the publican, what is it, I pray, in the farmer, to pretend that the tithes, the poor-rates, and so forth, fall exclusively upon him? When he comes with his bushel of wheat, and asks six and sixpence a bushel for it, which is much about what he gets at the present time, "what is that for?" says the miller: "why, you get forty of these bushels to an acre, and you only scratch the ground about a little and throw in a few seeds!"—"Aye," says the farmer, "but I have rent to pay."—"Yes," says the other, "what, thirty shillings an acre, and you ask two hundred and sixty shillings for the wheat of an acre!"—"Well,"

says the farmer, "but you do
 "not consider that the parson has
 "taken away a tenth part of my
 "wheat in tithes; that I have
 "paid poor-rates to the amount
 "of thirty or forty shillings an
 "acre; that I have paid road-
 "rates, county-rates; that I have
 "paid tax upon my leather, tax
 "upon my iron, tax upon my
 "windows, tax upon the rotten
 "cotton that my wife and daugh-
 "ters wear, (and, rotten cottons
 "they must have, or they will
 "plague me worse than the couch-
 "grass); tax upon my malt; tax
 "upon my own fat after it is
 "turned into candles; that I have
 "paid all the taxes that all my
 "labourers pay, and a part of all
 "the taxes that my blacksmith
 "and wheelwright have paid; so
 "that you see, my friend, that
 "my bushel of wheat, though I
 "sell it for six and sixpence,
 "leaves me devilish little for my-
 "self."—"I see it clear enough,"
 answers the other, "and, there-
 "fore, here is the six and six-
 "pence, which I shall make the

"baker pay me, and which he
 "will make the weaver, the spin-
 "ner, the shoemaker, the black-
 "smith, the hod-man, or the
 "chimney-sweeper, pay him:
 "this is all true; but, pray, my
 "good honest farmer, never let
 "me hear you again pretend that
 "the tithes, poor-rates, road-
 "rates, and so forth, '*fall exclu-*
 "*sively upon the land!*'"

After this, I will not insult you,
 my good friends, by saying another
 word upon this part of the subject.
 It must, now, be clear to you, if
 it were not before, that, out of a
 certain place, which, for reasons
 easier to be understood than safe
 to explain; out of that certain
 place, a man ought to be re-
 garded as a born idiot, or pos-
 sessed of idiotism acquired by
 infinite pains, to be capable of be-
 ing persuaded, that the land bears
 any burthen exclusively; to be
 capable of being persuaded that
 any sum of money or any portion
 of produce taken from the owner
 or occupier; that the amount of
 these do not distribute themselves

throughout the community, and finally fall in exact and due proportions upon all the consumers of all the produce of the land. The pretence, therefore, that the land bears exclusive burthens is wholly groundless; and, the notion is, as I said before, one that never entered into the minds of our forefathers. Poverty and misery have always a tendency to bereave men of their sober senses, and, particularly, of their sense of fair-dealing and of probity. The funding system has, at last, bereft the land people of their senses. They see their estates melting away; and they find out this pretended cause for it; namely, that they do not get a *remunerating price* for their produce. It is strange that it never entered into their heads to carry this principle of theirs further than the wheat-stack, or, at least, the corn-stack. The corn does not form above a third or a fourth part; nay, not a fourth part, in amount, of the produce of the land. The baker is a poor thing, compared to the butcher, not to mention the

clothier and the linen-draper, and divers other persons who sell us the produce of the land. Get upon a hill half a mile high and look round you: see what the corn-land is in extent, compared with the woods and the pastures of various descriptions. It is, comparatively, but a little patch here and a little patch there. How happens it, then, that the wiseacres of remunerating prices never say a word about the price of *wood* or of *meat*? Why do they not call for a wood-bill or a meat-bill? For, observe, they fall in price as the corn falls in price: not caused by the fall of the corn; but falling from the same cause that makes the corn fall. POOR WEBB HALL was strangely puzzled, when, at a time when he was bellowing for a Corn-Bill that would drive the bonded corn back to foreign countries; he was strangely puzzled when he was asked, how the price of *coppice-wood* came to fall, even in a greater degree than that of the corn had fallen, when it was notorious that coppice-wood had

never been imported, even to the amount of one hundred of lime-kiln faggots. This puzzled the head of poor WEBB exceedingly. He was, at last, the subject of general laughter: but, those who laugh at others, do not always take care to avoid being laughed at themselves; and, accordingly, we shall now hear as much bleating about remunerating prices as ever; and, some miserable attempt will be made to pacify those who are crying for an alteration in the Corn Laws, and, at the same time, *to keep up the price of corn.*

This, however; this last, namely, to keep up the price of corn, which means, if it have any sense at all in it, keeping up the price of all the produce of the land; this last is impossible to be effected, without driving the gold out of the country; without repealing the Small-note Bill passed last year; without again returning to Bank-restriction, or without producing another "Late Panic"; without one or the other of these, it is as impossible to make corn

dear in England, or *to keep it any length of time even at the present price*; this is as impossible as it is for Mr. CANNING to utter one single sentence of common sense upon any of these subjects. There would appear to be a sort of predestinated blindness upon this subject. Noblemen, commonly called Lords, in a lump, are, as a sort of fashionable talk, generally represented as men that never think at all. I will not apply the term which is commonly applied to them; and, as far as my very limited personal knowledge of them has gone, I must confess that I have discovered nothing in them to justify this vulgar opinion. But, at any rate, they have sense enough to be trusted to walk about without leaders; they do not, when they ride out, plunge into rivers, or go down chalk-pits; they can be trusted to cut their own victuals at dinner without danger of laying open their cheeks with the knife, or running the fork into their eyes. One may suppose all this, to be sure, without implying any great

degree of elevation in the scale of intellect. Yet, it implies humanity : what my American philosopher calls, the species, *homo sapiens*. Let it be on the lowest scale, if the disputant will insist upon it (but which, observe, I myself by no means admit) ; let it be on a scale but one degree above that class of negroes who do not know what causes the smart when they are cut with a knife : that is quite enough for the present purpose ; quite enough to excite astonishment in me, that any one nobleman in England should not see that it is impossible to keep up the price of corn without producing one or other of the effects which I have enumerated at the beginning of this paragraph.

They have seen the corn continue steadily to fall in price from the year 1819 to the middle of 1822, while they most carefully excluded grain of every description from the country. They have seen a Bill passed that caused an increase of the paper-money, and they have seen the wheat rise

gradually with that increase from an average of about four and sixpence to an average of about nine shillings a bushel. They have seen "Late Panic" come, and the paper drawn, in part, in again, accompanied by a law, which is finally to have the effect of Peel's Bill ; and, in the course of twelve months, they have seen the wheat come down from nine shillings a bushel to six and sixpence a bushel. They have seen a crop of corn so short (this last year, taking the crop altogether) that the government thought itself justified in opening the ports for some sorts of grain, merely by an order of the King in council. They must know that when other sorts of grain are scarce or short in crop, wheat is applied in numerous cases so as to supply the place of those other sorts of grain. They must, therefore, know that wheat would have been dearer this year than last year, according to all ordinary rules and calculations : yet, they actually see that it is cheaper by one-fourth,

at the least. Between harvest and Christmas is the time when wheat is, generally, and, indeed, always, at a lower price than at any other time of the year. Yet, their Lordships have seen that the wheat was at fifty-seven shillings and seven-pence a quarter on the twelfth of August last; and, that, last Saturday, the price was fifty-three shillings and ten-pence, it being to be borne in mind, too, when we are comparing the prices of this year with the prices of about a year ago, that the new measure makes a difference of about two shillings upon a quarter of wheat, supposing the price to be about fifty-six shillings the quarter; so, at this time, the price of wheat, according to the old measure, is, according to the average return, about fifty-two shillings the quarter; and, it is equally true that, at one time, within the last eighteen months or thereabouts, only just before "Late Panic," it was between seventy and eighty shillings a quarter.

Now, my friends, I ask if it be possible for any of the species of the *homo sapiens*; any creature rational enough to be set up by the side of a table with an edged instrument in one hand and a pointed one in t'other hand, who has been viewing all these changes, not to perceive, that the Corn Bill, which, with regard to wheat, has been equally in force during the whole of the time; I ask if it be possible that any creature fit to be intrusted with those instruments in its hands, can want the capacity of perceiving, that it is not the Corn Bill that is the great cause affecting prices; and that it can fail to perceive that the *main* cause, and the only cause worth the landlord's thinking about, is the *paper-money*? If you do think that this be possible (and I have a great opinion of your judgment in such cases), then no more of your edge-tools, say I. Great, blunt silver forks for your life, with a bit of bread in the other hand, and let them lick up their dishes like the beastly

French, wiping round their chops with the remnant of their bread, and then stick that into their mouths as a finish. Oh! by heavens, no more English knives and forks! no more English joints of meat; nothing that wants cutting; nothing that cannot be torn to pieces with the hands or pinched off with the fingers; these latter were made before forks, and, in God's name, let them have them and have nothing else, who can now stand up and bawl like Sten-tor for a "*Corn Bill to give them remunerating prices*"!

Well, then, respect for our "pastors and masters," decent reverence for our "betters," must, my friends, make us presume that we shall never, any more, hear such abominable nonsense come from their lips. Nevertheless, it must be allowed, that the introduction of foreign corn would, *at this time*, somewhat lower the price; and, therefore, a strong endeavour will be made to prevent it being introduced. If foreign corn had been introduced in July

1822, it would not have lowered the price one single penny per bushel. In short, it would not have been brought in, for it was selling as cheap here at that time, as it was, on an average, selling upon the continent, taking the quality and the expenses of importation into view. If Peel's Bill had gone into full effect, corn would have been at as low a price here as it would have been in France. That Bill has now been, in effect, **RE-ENACTED**. The law now stands just as it stood in 1821. At that time, the law was suffered to go on towards coming into full effect, which period of full effect was the month of May 1823; but, in July 1822, nine months before the period for the Bill going into full effect, the Bill was, as to its most material parts, repealed. That repeal, however, though it sent up prices, produced "**Late Panic**." The snails at Whitehall, feeling the effects of "**Late Panic**," just as snails do the approach of hot lime, drew in their horns: they saw that one-pound

notes were the devil, and they enacted that one-pound notes should cease in three years. One year of the time will have passed on the fifth day of April next: we have only had nine months of the three years yet; but, these nine months have brought down the wheat, even in a season of scarcity, one-fourth lower than it was before the re-enactment of Peel's Bill took place. It is notorious: it is a fact, that even the silver-fork gentry must be acquainted with, that the far greater part of the currency, in almost every county in the kingdom, consists of one-pound notes. Go to any farmer in Kent, Sussex, Hampshire, Wiltshire, anywhere: ask him how he thinks he should get on if the one-pound notes were to cease to circulate. He will tell you directly that he could not go on at all: he will tell you that it is absolute madness to think of it.

Therefore, my friends, let them do what they please about the Corn Bill, corn must, if they

keep the Paper-Bill in force, come down to the price of the corn in France; and, lower price than that of French corn at *this time*, because, to supply the place of the one-pound notes, gold must be brought from other countries, and amongst the rest, from France, and that will cause a falling in the price of French corn. The difficulty of the landowners, that is to say, of our law-makers, is this: if they repeal the Paper-Bill which they passed last year, without, at the same time, making a Bank restriction, they produce another "Late Panic." Bank restriction is, in other words, an issue of *assignats*, two prices in the market, and a total blowing up that way. Another "Late Panic" I need not describe the effect of: he that does not, as to this, recollect the past, and anticipate the future, is not fit to be trusted, even with a blunt silver fork. There remains, then, nothing for these landholders to do but to let the thing go on as it is going; to let the one-pound notes cease

to exist; to reduce the corn in price, so that a bushel of wheat shall sell for about three and sixpence; and then, the landowners may go, take a last kiss of their domains and bid them adieu for ever! It must be confessed, my friends, that this is a pretty pickle to be in, and might well bring a very rational creature to be unfit for the use of edge and pointed tools; but, you and I, at any rate, have the consolation of reflecting, that no part of this difficulty of these our betters is at all ascribable to us. We have besought them, time and often, to make provision against this day of danger. A million and a half of us, in 1817, prayed to them, implored them as if we were begging for an alms, to adopt measures for the prevention of this danger. They turned a deaf ear to our prayers, they scouted our implorings, they called us designing and seditious, and they enacted that the Secretaries of State should send to dungeons those of us whom they might think proper

to suspect; to dungeons, there to be kept from the sight, if they chose, of relations, friends, or associates, and there to be deprived of the use of pen, ink and paper, and of the use of any book except such as our keepers might choose to allow us to read. While, therefore, we view the pickle in which they are now placed, if we refrain from exulting at their trouble and their peril, if we, at last, begin to feel compassion for them, and that we shall feel, after all (for some of them, at least), if they enforce the law which they last enacted; if we thus feel (and I have no objection to any one feeling thus), let us always remember that their suffering will not be ascribable to us; and let us always remind them, that, if they had, in 1817, listened to our humble and dutiful prayers, instead of enacting that a dungeon might be our lot, they never would have seen the present day of trouble, of doubt, of fear, of anxiety and of real danger. For my own part, I have no desire to add wormwood to the bit-

terness of their mess ; but, I must remind them that, when we met on Portsdown Hill, to beseech them to provide for our safety and their own, they had provided troops of yeomanry-cavalry, mounted, ready to surround us, with swords by their sides and carabines loaded with bullets. Let the landowners, who were then our bitterest enemies, now read the petition signed on Portsdown Hill, on that day ; let them only read that petition, and that is the utmost stretch of that revenge which is sought for by

Your faithful Friend,

WM. COBBETT.

THE CABINET.

I TAKE the following paragraph from the *Morning Chronicle*, the Editor of which says that he took it from the *Dublin Evening Post*.

“POLITICAL CHANGES.—Notwithstanding the sneer of *The Times*, we can, we think, confidently state, that the Earl of Liverpool’s health will not allow him much longer to remain in office ; and it

“is equally certain, that Lord Westmoreland and Mr. Canning cannot continue to sit together at the same Council Board. We may add, and we regret to be obliged to do so, that Mr. Robinson continues to press his resignation. Upon these facts, we think, the reader may implicitly rely. On the other hand, we are sorry, at the same time, to be obliged to state, that Mr. Canning’s health has declined so much, that his friends fear he will not be able to support the labour of the Session.”

Now, besides that it is an odd sort of route for news of this kind to take, going from London to Dublin and then back again ; besides this, here is rather too much to swallow at once ; and I would advise my readers not to swallow even the smallest part of it ; for, here goes, at one single smack, a Prime Minister, a Lord Privy Seal, a Secretary of State, and a Chancellor of the Exchequer. This is too much to swallow ; but, I must inform my readers that I have heard of stories of this kind, especially as relating to Lord Westmoreland and Mr. Canning ; that is to say, I have heard it through the newspapers, who

have been talking about this ever since the sort of half-declaration-of-war against Spain. If the news be true, which I neither believe nor disbelieve, however ; but, if it be true, I should suppose Lord WESTMORELAND to be a man of very tenacious, or adhering disposition ; or, rather, perhaps, I should say, of a very affectionate disposition ; that is, I mean, having a strong affection for, an unalterable attachment to, his estate ; a parental fondness for the square acres, the trees, underwoods, pastures, corn-fields, parks, orchards, gardens and parterres, by no means forgetting the deer and those precious commodities, the hares, pheasants and partridges, adding thereunto, with singular consistency, the foxes which devour them. In short, if it be impossible, as this Irishman assures us it is, as he bids us " implicitly believe," that my Lord WESTMORELAND can sit any longer at the same council-board with Mr. CANNING, it is a strong argument for my believing that his Lordship

has formed a firm resolution still to have a board to sit at in his own mansion house, which, upon my honour and soul I think it is likely he would not, if the policy, developed, even in the speech printed by RIDGWAY as of Mr. CANNING's editing, were adopted and acted upon by the Government of England. That policy appears to me to be little short of the fruit of insanity or of something very much like it. According to that policy, we are to have all the hazards of war and none of its benefits : we are to risk every thing, and be sure to gain nothing. Above all things, we are to act upon principles which no English jacobin or one that has been called a jacobin, has ever attempted to preach or to justify.—What a pretty figure do we make in the world at this moment ! Whole bales of the Minister's corrected speech, shipped to Paris to be distributed in order to remove the impression created by the newspaper speech ! One of the French papers observes

that the public mind in England had been changed by my first Letter to Mr. CANNING.

Nothing was ever more true than this. The truth is in the mouth of every body; but, the pride that I should naturally feel at hearing such power truly ascribed to me, is, in this case, smothered by the shame which it makes me feel for my country. What! an English Minister, one of the King's principal Secretaries of State, edit and publish a pamphlet eating his words, or, at the very least, exposing himself to that imputation! An English Minister sending, or winking at the sending, parcels of that pamphlet in order to quiet foreign nations! This is something new in our history; something upon a perfect level, however, with all the projects of constitution-making and of free trade that we have, of late, been compelled to witness. When I think of these things, I am the more disposed to believe that there is *some* ground, more or less, for the rumour about some of these

changes in the ministry. I do not wholly agree; and, in some things, I wholly disagree, with my correspondent whose letter I shall by-and-by insert, and who signs himself "A TORY"; but, there are parts of his letter very well worthy of great attention; and, I do verily believe, that a great part of the Members of both Houses of Parliament, and, particularly, the Lords, will be found to concur in most of the sentiments of that letter. To get into a war at this time; even to be placed in a state of likelihood to be at war, is what any wise Minister would have avoided. Here are quite difficulties enough at home. Mr. Canning would have found quite enough to do to accomplish his wish of getting "a piece of gold into every man's pocket," and "*a fowl into every man's pot,*" which latter is absolutely not to be accomplished without a general robbing of hen-roosts. How the devil the fowl got into his head, I cannot imagine. It is precisely the idea of a Sussex poacher, whose

motto is "*fleck or feather*," and, into the pot it goes. He never either broils, fries, or roasts. Into the paste and then into the pot. Mr. CANNING would have found quite enough to do in effecting his project for having "a lofty mountain of paper money, the base of which should be irrigated with gold," which, though it discovered, no doubt, a great extent of knowledge in matters of agriculture, was a thing not easily practised in matters of finance. Mr. CANNING would have found quite enough to do in redeeming his pledge of "*never again returning to Bank restriction*." Many other things would have required his attention, without getting into a war, at the very best a one-sided war, all out-going and no in-coming, for the sole purpose of enabling a party in Portugal to force a new-fangled constitution down the throats of at least a very large part of the people, including, as is agreed on all hands, the great 'body of the clergy, who, of whatever description they may be,

have never been found the most docile in swallowing things which they do not like. We have *no news* from Portugal. If there were news at all favourable to us, we should hear it, fast enough. It seems to be agreed on all hands, that there is a large Spanish army on the confines of Portugal. Now, suppose Sussex (look at the map; reader) to be in a state of civil war, one party being called *smugglers*, and t'other party *fair-traders*; suppose Kent, Surrey, and Hampshire, well backed up by six or eight other such counties, to be all for the smugglers, and to have drawn an army round Sussex from Havant to Rye, coming up, in the middle, to Godstone, and along round upon the edge of Sussex through Kent. Suppose this army to be, as I said before, for the smuggling party: suppose it not to *invade* Sussex; not to step a foot over the boundary lines. Oh, by no means! but, to stand there to let the smuggling party take refuge in Kent, Surrey or Hampshire, if

necessary, and to prevent, most effectually, the fair-traders from taking such refuge, or, if they sought such refuge, to take them and lay them by the heels. Suppose that to be the case; you then have a pretty correct view of the state of our concern in Portugal; and it seems to me quite improbable that we should succeed in establishing this new constitution in Portugal; and, at the very least, it must cost us immense sums of money to effect that which, as far as we know to the contrary, might be injurious to us after it was effected.—Now, it does seem very likely that some of the Members of the Cabinet may have seen this matter in the light in which I see it; and, if they have, it is possible, and even probable, that some change may take place in that Cabinet; for, it is very clear, that Mr. CANNING is pledged to the project: his reputation for the remainder of his life, and his character as a statesman for ever, depends, in a great degree, upon the result of this, which

I deem one of the wildest projects that ever entered into the head of mortal man. As to *my* opinion of him, the “*mountain of paper, irrigated with gold at the base*”; the “*fowl in the pot*”; the “*setting the question at rest for ever*”; the “*British mother*” and the “*American daughter*”; the “*half a dozen fir frigates with bits of striped bunting at their mast heads*”: these, together with many other sallies of the same description, not forgetting “*the revered and ruptured Ogden*,” the “*low, degraded crew*” of Reformers and the “*making a stand against democratical encroachment*,” when the wicked democrats wanted to produce at the bar proofs of the selling of a seat: these and many other things of the same sort have long ago marked, and fixed in my mind, the character of Mr. CANNING as a statesman: but, I am but one man: I and my readers are many thousands, to be sure, and reflecting thousands too; but, in a comparison of numbers, we

are nothing to the mass; but, even with that mass, he is destroyed for ever in point of character as a statesman, if he fail in this undertaking; and fail he will, I verily believe.

AMERICAN SEEDS.

SINCE last week, I have received news of the arrival of the ship *Columbia* from New York, which has ten or twelve sorts of seeds, some of them very rare, which I have not, as yet, in my possession. The ship was off Plymouth on Monday last, and is, possibly, now in the river. This will make a great addition to the number of sorts of seeds, a list of the whole of which shall be inserted in my next. I think I can say with truth that I now possess a larger collection of fine trees and shrubs (or, rather the seed of them) than ever was before possessed by any man in England at one time.

THE MARKETS.

IN answer to such Correspondents who have complained of the non-insertion of the accounts of the MARKETS in the last *Register*, I have to observe that I have received from the Commissioners of Stamps, through the Solicitor to that Board, an intimation that there have been certain articles published in the *Register*, which, being deemed articles of "*public news or intelligence*," will, if continued to be published in the *Register*, expose me to the penalties of the Act in that case made and provided. I have not yet ascertained of what description the articles alluded to are; but, until I am able to ascertain that, I must leave out every thing which can possibly, as far as my judgment goes, come within the meaning of the prohibition contained in the Act. An account of the state of the markets may, possibly, be meant: I have, therefore, left them out for the present, being extremely anxious to avoid any transgression of the law.

THE THREATENED WAR.

THE exercise of the duty of every citizen to prevent a war, especially a war threatening dreadful consequences, requires neither apology or explanation.

Mr. Canning has menaced his country with this calamity ever since he last came into power; and now he calculates upon the aid of a "tremendous power," the assistance of all the discontented spirits throughout Europe, that is, that the jacobins of every state will rise in rebellion against the governments they live under, and co-operate with us, a co-operation which now avowedly we will accept and rely upon. If thirty years' experience has been lost upon Mr. Canning, it is necessary to undeceive him: if he will re-enact and republish in the English Parliament, the jacobin Decree of the French Convention on the 19th of November, 1792, granting assistance and fraternity to every people desirous of throwing off

their existing government, his memory should be recalled to the consequences which experience have made history.

About the time that celebrated Decree was passed, several deputations from political societies in England and other countries, went to the bar of the French Convention, and presented addresses congratulating the French on their emancipation, and assuring them that millions of the countrymen of these addressers, panted for an opportunity also to break their chains. The alarm spread in England that the population was moving on to a revolution, the Whig party split, and one half of it went over to Mr. Pitt, to support him in resisting the revolutionary mania. The nation was in a state of fever, agitation, and alarm. Already we had recalled our Ambassador from France, and had manifested unequivocal marks of a spirit hostile to the French Revolution. War was apprehended between the two countries; but the French Con-

vention, then, like Mr. Canning now, boasted that England dared not make an attack, as the English people would revolt, and join the standard of liberty. So fully did they calculate on the aid which "the holy duty of insurrection" would afford them, not only among the English, but the Germans, and the other nations of Europe, that directions were given to enclose the Rights of Man in canisters, translated into suitable languages, that they might be fired into the enemies lines in the confidence revolt would instantly follow the knowledge of oppression. What was the result? Not a man deserted the standard of his country! The English royalists trembled for the trial; but not one English bayonet wavered in the face of the enemy. The war had the effect of crushing jacobin principles in England, and Mr. Pitt was accused (it was the ground of the most loud and general of the accusations by the jacobins in Britain) of having made war, for the sole purpose of smo-

thering the rising spirit of liberty in England, an object in which it was said he too fatally succeeded. In no part of Europe did French principles assist the French arms during that war. The moment a nation entered upon a foreign war, domestic dissension disappeared, either suppressed, ashamed, or superseded by nationality.

Upon other and more recent occasions this important truth was proved. Rebellious as a great part of the Irish were, they never joined the French. This is the opinion in France. When the French appeared at Bantry Bay, they complained of the want of even a manifestation in their favour. General Humbert marched over a great part of Ireland with a French force, yet none but a very few ragamuffins came to him, rather as he said for what they could pilfer, than to fight under his standard. Read the deplorable accounts of General Moore and his officers, complaining that the Spaniards gave them no sup-

port, but treated the English unkindly, though they came to fight, not for political principles, on which there might have been a difference of opinion, but for the independence of Spain. The Duke of Wellington, during some of his first campaigns, made the same complaints, till he was advised to follow the example of the French in that respect, by publicly pretending the natives were most friendly, however annoying in reality might be their conduct. Our French subjects in Canada could not be seduced by republicanism, but fought most gallantly on our side. Read the history of the same hopes of domestic assistance from opposite principles. What was the fate of the French royalists at Toulon and La Vendee when assisted by the English? Many more instances might be given; but they shall be closed with the very recent and applicable one. Three years ago, when the French first entered Spain under the Duke of Angoulême, Savary, Lallemande, and others,

of Buonaparte's officers, calculated, like Mr. Canning and Danton and Robespierre, that liberal principles would seduce the French troops from their allegiance. They dressed themselves in the French republican uniform, with the insignia of the Corsican Emperor, and exposed their persons almost to the very grasp of their advancing countrymen, persuaded liberal principles and glorious recollections would make them throw down their arms, and embrace as brothers. Yet, not a man faltered. The French troops directed their shot against their countrymen, the friends of liberty, with as much sincerity as ever they had done against Austrians or Prussians. And has the French Government, like Mr. Canning, forgotten the history of these important events?

Suppose a war takes place, England and Portugal against Spain and France, for no other war requiring serious consideration can occur. England will of course have all the Portuguese

liberals on her side. They are evidently the minority of the people, and the least powerful of the two parties in Portugal, excepting only that they have the Government in their hands, and are supported by England. But the English are disliked by the Portuguese, notwithstanding all favours, and most of all are they disliked by the liberals. We cannot forget with what eagerness the English officers were dismissed from the Portuguese army a dozen years ago, as soon as the Portuguese became their own masters. In relying on the support of the liberals in Portugal, on account of political principles, we should be relying on a rotten staff. In Spain, Mr. Canning admits the majority of the people are in favour of the present most illiberal, unwise, deplorable system; and whether he admits it or not, the fact is so. The English are still more odious to the Spaniards than to the Portuguese. The ruling faction hate them as heretics, and they as well as the liberals, but

more particularly the liberals, hate them for having separated the American Colonies from Spain. Of all the liberals and illiberals in Europe, the English are hated the most by the Spanish liberals, among whom commercial men take a strong lead.

Where, then, are we to find this "tremendous power" which is to shake the Holy Alliance and every throne in Europe? Not certainly in France. There the ascendancy of a military spirit, would make any war popular; but a war against England would of all others be the most popular. The last peace left England so proud and powerful, France so humbled and helpless, that shame and envy have engendered in Frenchmen's breasts a deeper hatred of England than ever before existed; a more blind and furious passion of revenge, which some may call a noble zeal to revive their country's glory. Republicans and royalists, bigots and Buonapartists, all Frenchmen, will unite eagerly to humble England

and exalt France. The Abbe Sieyes and some few old dotards of the revolution may indeed turn up their eyes, and sighing, lament that England should be embroiled for enforcing liberal principles in Portugal; but not a pen, much less a musket, will be lifted in France to assist her. Where, then, is this "tremendous power" to be found? Not in Germany, divided into small states, or into great military monarchies. Not in Italy, where 20,000 Austrians would sit down upon the imbecile revolutionists like a night mare. So much for the "tremendous power," respecting which, it would have been prudent to be silent. While left to remain in the shade, in the back ground, it would have been a mystery to excite doubts and fears in the French Government; but the moment the light of day is thrown upon it by investigation, its terrors vanish. By no step have the Bourbons strengthened their position more than by the war they have made on the liberals in Spain. Mercy

on us! That this lesson should have been thrown away upon Mr. Canning!—May he become sensible of the truth without attempting another experiment, pregnant as it would be with calamity to his country. If it led to a general war, as it would do if France embarked in it; if we had all Europe, as we should have, against us, except Portugal, which neither could nor would give much assistance, and which, at any rate, we could not long hold, what could be the consequence but loss and disgrace? The governments of the continent would fight against us with all their heart, which they never did under Buonaparte. France would take the Netherlands, Spain would take Portugal, Prussia Hanover; and Russia and Austria would find ample equivalents in Germany, Italy, Poland and Turkey. From the proud and powerful eminence on which Lord Castlereagh placed us, Mr. Canning would tumble us down to the condition which Buonaparte ordered; and England

would have nothing to do with the continent.—Aye, but there is the new world! Oh! yes; the new world!! It would be on our side; it must be thrown into the scales in weighing the balance of power in Europe! Indeed! Why all America, the United States excepted, could not render so much assistance in a war in Europe as an English nobleman or gentleman occasionally has done. While the South American States could draw from us loans which were sent out in our manufactured goods, all went on swimmingly. But now that the folly of such loans is felt in England, the South American States and our manufactures, from the same cause, are sinking into poverty and distress. And, for the United States,—they would probably pick a quarrel in the hour of our difficulties, that they might ravish from us the object nearest their heart, the Canadas. On whatever grounds we began the war in 1793, all the world felt that, in 1812, our cause was that

of liberty, and of national independence. Yet the United States attacked us, attacked us when our danger was supposed to be so great that her success was certain; attacked us when every friend to the liberties of the world prayed for our success; attacked us for the selfish object of plundering us of the Canadas. And it is on the new world and the liberals of the old world we are to rely for aid in a war against Europe in arms! And this reliance was proclaimed by our leading statesman, nay, it was cheered by an unanimous Parliament! Has Providence confounded men's reason to show the world how highly it can exalt, and suddenly humble a nation?

So much for the "tremendous power" abroad; what is to be done with it at home? Is the Government to rely for support in the war on the disaffected, and to receive coldly the counsels of the loyal, which certainly will be given against such an enterprize? The disaffected already see, in

this measure, great financial difficulties, producing revolutions in property, which will produce revolutions in political institutions. The disaffected are *as eager for this war*, as they were eager in opposing that of 1793, and for the same reason. The one frustrated their views, the other facilitates them. The late reduction of interest in the Funds, produced prodigious agitation and discontent in private circles, among many well disposed persons; yet what would be such trifling occurrences compared with a suspension of the payment of the dividends till the peace!— But this has been better described in the Weekly Register, than it can be here.

So much for “the tremendous power;” so much for the revival of jacobinism, and rehatching of jacobins. We shall soon be without allies, and soon be without money. Then every thing must be sacrificed for the national safety, and all property must be laid open, given up as far as

occasion requires to Government. Discontent will occasion severe laws, the suspension of the Habeas Corpus, and of the constitution. And then it will be found that we were only bound by treaty to protect the integral independence of Portugal, without regard to her laws, constitution, or form of government. If indeed we were bound to these, it was to the ancient institutions of that country, not to the new fangled constitution of modern fashion. And why not have allowed the ancient institutions to remain? That would have been our easiest course. But the sneers of the Whigs had effect, and something different from what Lord Castlereagh did, must be done. Say what they will, it is evident Sir Charles Stewart was sent to Lisbon, thence to Brazil, and back again to Lisbon, to establish a constitution on “liberal principles.” It was to be shown that England had a new, a different Government, a Government acting in compliance with “the

spirit of the age ; " and the new American States, with the liberals all over the world, were to be conciliated. It was with ancient Portugal that England prospered ; but, indeed, with the new principles of free trade our ancient alliance could not exist, though so highly praised by Mr. Canning, the champion of free trade. That alliance was founded on prohibition and monopoly. Portugal nearly monopolised the English wine market, and England nearly monopolised the Portuguese market for manufactured goods. As the Corn Laws must be repealed to make way for free trade ; so probably Portugal must have free institutions, to make way for free trade also. Free trade will annihilate the advantages of the ancient commercial connexion between England and Portugal. The Portuguese, no doubt, foresee the effects of Mr. Huskisson's efforts to open a free trade with France, by lowering the duties on French silks, wines, &c. At the moment we are going to war to preserve our commercial connexion with Portugal ; at the very same moment we are enforcing free trade, which must annihilate the value of that connexion. There is no proof, nay, there is no pretence, that Spain, or any

other power, intends to invade, much less to seize, or conquer, any part of Portugal. We therefore have no right, by treaty, to move. If the Portuguese quarrel among themselves about their constitution, what is that to us ? Are we " to interfere in the internal concerns of other nations ; " to commit so monstrous a breach of public law as this, against which, with reference to France, the Whigs so loudly exclaimed every night in Parliament, thirty years ago ? It was said, Mr. Pitt sent to the Dutch Government, in 1793, begging them to solicit assistance from England, to protect Holland against the French ; and that, upon the request being made by the Dutch, the guards, and other troops, were sent with as much expedition and eclat as they are now sending to Lisbon. And there is every appearance that, on the present occasion, the English Government has sent to the Portuguese Ministry, requesting them to require us to send military aid. Military aid to protect Portugal, we trust ; only to protect Portugal ; not to invade Spain. That will produce a general war in Portugal. Let the English army and the English navy combat the Portuguese who love their ancient institutions.

Let them crush the majority, that a minority may force their countrymen to wear a piece of English manufacture, called a free constitution. This is not exactly consistent with the principles of free trade, to be sure; but it will be a harmless work compared with a war against Spain and France.

Ever since Mr. Canning came last into power, he has betrayed symptoms of warlike designs. Mr. Hume and the Whigs had worried the ministry to reduce the army to the lowest ebb, and yet they cried, Lower, lower still. They were not satisfied. When Mr. Canning came into power, the same ministers increased the army, and then Mr. Hume and the Whigs were satisfied. *Why*, does not appear. Whether there was a secret understanding, that liberal principles were soon to be set up, and fought for, we know not. But, however inconsistent and unaccountable this conduct of the Whigs might appear, it was nothing compared with the conduct of the Tories in power. They sit in the same Cabinet, and, if it be true, that they unanimously agree to call into action all the jacobins of Europe, to effect revolutions in established governments, they apostatize from all the political principles of their

lives; they virtually condemn all their political actions during the last thirty years, and constitute themselves a committee of public safety. In nothing does the brilliancy of Mr. Canning's genius shine so brightly, as in effecting this astonishing change; for it can only have been his persuasive powers that could have effected it. It cannot be a sordid love of lucre, an unprincipled love of power, a readiness to sacrifice country, rather than sacrifice place. No! Tories are honourable, disinterested patriots, who would sacrifice their "lives and fortunes," rather than countenance the revolutionary jacobins of the age; but unfortunately, on the present occasion, those in power must be weak, though honest, men, easily deluded by the fascinations of the magician who is placed so high in power. He has avowed himself ready to become the leader of the political incendiaries throughout Europe, thus filling the station from which Buonaparte fell, and standing confessed the successor of that person whom Mr. Pitt called "the Child and Champion of Jacobinism."

A TORY.

16 Dec. 1826.